

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 4698
APPLICANT NAME: County of Plumas
PROJECT TITLE: Upper Feather River Watershed and Water Quality Improvement

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$ 9,999,438
COST MATCH: \$ 4,037,952
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$14,037,390

DESCRIPTION: The projects include stream restoration and erosion control at priority sites in the Plumas National Forest; new wetlands to expand municipal tertiary wastewater treatment; well inventory and capping in Sierra Valley to prevent groundwater contamination; implementing model management practices on two Feather River Land Trust ranches in Sierra and Genesee Valleys; a modeling program in Sierra Valley to support integrated land and water management decision making; and watershed scale monitoring for water quality and fisheries. The projects create 37 acres of constructed wetlands, rewater 1,300 acres of decertified meadow, reduce summer water temperatures, improve wastewater treatment, restore 50 miles of degraded perennial streams, and provide essential data and tools for future management decisions.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The applicant provided a copy of the MOU that stated the IRWMP has been adopted and endorsed by the four participating agencies - County of Plumas, the Plumas National Forest, the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District, and the Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The applicant did a good job of briefly addressing each of the criteria in Attachment 5. They did not directly address the ecological processes or the environmental resources criteria in Attachment 5. However, the IRWMP contains an in-depth review of the region's resources. The applicant seems to have a very good understanding of their region.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The applicant provided a very comprehensive look at their objectives in Chapter 7 of the IRWMP with a breakdown of the goals, individual objectives, and appropriate actions. Chapter 1 provided the background into the documents that helped contribute to the IRWMP and how the regional planning objectives were determined. Chapter 2 broke down the goals and objectives into the major water-related objectives and potential conflicts.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The applicant addresses each of the water management strategies within their IRWMP. The scope of the IRWMP seems to encompass all of the water management strategies. However, discussion specific to how these strategies work together and create added benefits through the integration of multiple water management strategies was not identified within the IRWMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The applicant has regional priorities addressed, but specific projects with specific locations are not discussed in the IRWMP. They have packaged the implementation strategies as a regional plan and a general approach. The applicant discusses the regional priorities and some of the short- and long-term plans also. The applicant appears to be in touch with the impacts that the projects will have on their region, and would be responsive to implementation responses.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The applicant has a list of 8 projects that they intend to implement. They also provided a timeline with 7 of the 8 projects being completed by mid-2009. At least 1 of the signatories was assigned to each project. The projects are primarily intended to address water quality and water quantity concern. The applicant states that the projects are interdependent, but are designed such that they can be implemented separately if needed due to funding constraints.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The applicant does not present any negative impacts from the implementation of the projects or provide a statement that an evaluation was done. They discuss the advantages of a regional plan as it links other localized mandatory plans into a watershed-wide plan. They indirectly connect the water quality and water source improvements to the hydroelectric energy production, which can be assumed provides energy outside of their region.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

5

The Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Program has been in existence and implementing watershed improvement projects since 1984. A watershed scale monitoring program, to track long-term trends in watershed condition, has been in place since 2001. The IRWMP appears to be based on good science and has measures in place to track performance.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant states that it plans to develop a centralized data management system for the Upper Feather River Watershed to share IRWMP information with stakeholders, but the system does not exist, which limited this score. The applicant references do not reference SWAMP in the IRWMP. Attachment 5 does make one reference to SWAMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The IRWMP describes a feasible program for project financing, but does not specifically identify all beneficiaries or discuss ongoing support and O&M financing of implemented projects. The water resource projects are currently being supported by several agencies listed in the IRWMP, but there was little relevant discussion dedicated to this subject. There was no reference to any other new funding sources. The applicant did not make any connection between the existing funding sources and the new projects.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The IRWMP was developed and adopted by the principal planning and land management authorities in the watershed. Most of IRWMP Chapter 1 is dedicated to discussing the existing 7 local mandatory planning documents and how they have been used to create the IRWMP. The applicant discussed the participation of the existing signatories and their intent of pulling in more participating agencies. The applicant provides a good representation of how the planning documents relate to the management strategies. There appears to be good coordination with other local entities such as Feather River Coordinated Resource Management, Resource Conservation Districts, the Feather River Land Trust, and other special districts.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

4

It appears that there are standing relationships within the region that have been used to help create the IRWMP. The applicant identified public outreach activities generally and has a large list of existing participants. However, they could have done a better job of discussing outreach to the general public and new participants or stakeholder. The applicant discussed social and cultural characteristics.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match. Pass or Fail.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

15

The application includes detailed descriptions of the 8 proposed projects. The proposal is consistent with the IRWMP. Each project appears to be well defined and well developed. The environmental review seems to be addressed in each project. The applicant has provided links between their proposed projects and the RWB's Watershed Management Initiative.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The applicant connected its Priority Water Management Strategies and the IRWMP in the proposal, and expanded on project prioritization. The 8 proposed projects are discussed in a different sequence than they are listed in the proposal, and they are discussed in third sequence in Attachment 9. This makes it somewhat disjointed and causes readers to wonder if any of the three sequences represents their relative priorities. Although the proposal states that the 8 projects are the highest priority projects in the region, it appears that this mean that the projects have equal priority.

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Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The Attachment 7 budget tables provide all the generic line items for each of the proposed projects consistent with the PSP, but the information required and presented is not sufficiently detailed to judge whether the costs are reasonable, and there are 10 tables for the 8 projects.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

5

The applicant's schedule appears to be consistent with the projects and the timing appears to be reasonable. The schedule includes the CEQA/NEPA processes where applicable.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The applicant provided background into the watershed's current uses and sources of degradation (hydropower development), and they believe that this proposal will advance the goals of the IRWMP. The applicant did not mention cattle grazing or make a direct connection with water temperatures. They believe that the projects are needed to document predicted water supply and quality benefits. The projects will also inject much needed economic stimulus.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

10

The applicant did a very good job of describing how each project impacts their DACs. The applicant states that the entire region qualifies as a DAC, but they are not requesting a waiver of the funding match.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

5

The applicant addressed each criterion adequately and how the projects will meet the Program Preferences.

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| TOTAL SCORE: 106 |
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